

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 070905
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /013 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:EUR/PE:PLLAASE

APPROVED BY:EUR/RPE:PLLAASE

-----062720 201706Z /43

O 201655Z MAR 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 070905

USEEC

FOLLOWING REPEAT BONN 04809 ACTION SECSTATE INFO MOSCOW
GENEVA DATED MAR 16:

QTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 04809

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECE, ENRG, GW

SUBJ: ECE - TREATMENT OF BREZHNEV PROPOSAL FOR AN
ENERGY CONFERENCE

REF: (A) STATE 59551 (B) GENEVA 3446 (C) 77 BONN 14026

1. FRG ALSO RE-EVALUATING POSITION ON PROPOSAL IN LIGHT
OF BELGRADE OUTCOME. BASIC FRG POSITION DESCRIBED
REF (C) AND PREVIOUS IS NOW IN STATE OF FLUX, WITH
ECONOMICS MINISTRY, FOREIGN OFFICE AND CHANCELLOR'S
OFFICE EACH TAKING SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT LINE.

2. ECONOMICS MINISTRY VIEW IS THAT THERE IS NO NEED FOR
UN ENERGY CONFERENCE AT HIGH LEVELS IN ECE AT
THIS TIME. ARGUMENT IS THAT THIS WOULD "REWARD"
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RUSSIANS UNDESERVEDLY. IN ADDITION, CONFERENCE COULD
LEAD TO PRESSURE FOR WEST TO COMMIT ITSELF TO PROJECTS
IN THE EAST OR TO TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY. MINISTRY
BELIEVES THAT THESE DECISIONS SHOULD BE LEFT TO PRIVATE
BUSINESS.

3. THE FOREIGN OFFICE VIEWS THE SITUATION IN A LONGER

TERM CONTEXT. THEY FEEL THAT, SOONER OR LATER, THE WEST WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE RUSSIANS ON ENERGY. IN THE YEARS AHEAD, THE ENERGY RESOURCES (OIL AND GAS) OF THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH NOW PROVIDE MOST OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR EASTERN EUROPE, WILL BECOME MORE SCARCE. THIS COULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TO CUTBACKS ON DELIVERIES OF SOVIET FOSSIL FUEL ENERGY TO BOTH EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE. ANTICIPATING THIS SITUATION IS IMPORTANT, SAYS THE FOREIGN OFFICE, AND ONE WAY OF GETTING A DIALOG GOING IS TO ENCOURAGE EAST-WEST DISCUSSIONS. THE ECE SEEMED A CONVENIENT PLACE BECAUSE OF THE MIXTURE OF COUNTRIES REPRESENTED IN IT AND BECAUSE OF THE ECE'S BACKGROUND EXPERTISE.

4. THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE PLACES ITS EMPHASIS ON THE POLITICAL ASPECTS AND POSSIBLE RESULTS OF THE PROPOSAL. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT REPORTEDLY VIEWS THE PROPOSAL AS POSITIVE IN THAT IT WOULD HELP KEEP THE SPIRIT OF DETENTE ALIVE AND SECOND THAT IT MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE HELPFUL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM OF PROVIDING ENERGY TO BERLIN. THE CHANCELLOR DID CONSIDER THE PROPOSED CONFERENCE OF SUFFICIENT IMPORTANCE TO RAISE IT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AT THEIR MEETING LAST JULY.

5. ON MONDAY, MARCH 13, ECE SECRETARY GENERAL
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STANOVNIK CAME TO BONN AND SPOKE TO ECONOMICS MINISTER LAMBSDORFF AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM SEVERAL OTHER MINISTRIES. STANOVNIK SUGGESTED TWO ALTERNATIVES FOR CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE ECE ON THE SUBJECT OF ENERGY: FIRST, INTENSIFICATION OF ONGOING STUDIES ON ENERGY WITHIN THE ECE; SECOND, FORMATION OF A HIGH-LEVEL (SENIOR ADVISORS) GROUP TO DEAL SPECIFICALLY WITH ENERGY QUESTIONS. WHILE FRG POLICY IS NOT YET DEFINITE, THE GENERAL GERMAN REACTION TO STANOVNIK'S SUGGESTIONS WAS NON-COMMITAL. THE GERMANS DO NOT HAVE THEIR OWN POSITION CLEARED AMONG THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES YET; IN ADDITION, THEY EXPECT THAT THE SUBJECT WILL BE DISCUSSED ON FRIDAY THE 17TH WITHIN THE EC.

6. SUMMARIZING THE PROVISIONAL FRG POSITION WOULD GO AS FOLLOWS: THE FRG WOULD PROBABLY NOT SUPPORT AN INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON ENERGY A LA BREZHNEV NOW; THEY OPPOSE THE STANOVNIK SUGGESTION OF ESTABLISHING A NEW HIGH LEVEL GROUP WITHIN THE ECE TO DEAL WITH ENERGY; THEY MIGHT GO ALONG WITH INTENSIFIED STUDIES THERE.

7. THE FOREIGN OFFICE POINTED OUT THAT ONE EVENT WHICH MIGHT CAUSE THE FRG TO CHANGE ITS MIND ON A CONFERENCE WOULD BE A VISIT BY BREZHNEV TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC. AT THAT POINT, THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE COULD DECIDE IT NEEDED TO ACCEPT THE BREZHNEV PROPOSAL IN SOME FORM AS A "SWEETENER" FOR THE MEETING.

8. FRG OFFICIALS ARE ANXIOUS TO HAVE US VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT. PLEASE ADVISE.
MEEHAN UNQTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, ENERGY, PLANNING MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE070905
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR/PE:PLLAASE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780122-1049
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780347/aaaabnhb.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 07f660c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 59551, 78 GENEVA 3446, 77 BONN 14026
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3267103
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ECE - TREATMENT OF BREZHNEV PROPOSAL FOR AN ENERGY CONFERENCE
TAGS: ENRG, GE, ECE, (BREZHNEV, LEONID I)
To: BRUSSELS USEEC
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/07f660c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014